

Commission on the Status of Men

NHCSM Minutes
October 30 2009 1 – 3:30 PM

1. Call to Order/Introduction of the Commissioners and Guests – **Chairman Joe Mastromarino is away and the group asked Treasurer David Lauren to run the meeting. He graciously accepted and called the meeting to order at 1:14. Members Larry Colby, Michael Geanoulis, David Lauren, Scott Meyer and Cam Sinclair were in attendance. One seat on the Commission remains empty awaiting the Governor and Governor's Executive Council approval of one of several interested applicants**
2. Adopt Agenda – **Larry proposed adding item 6, a discussion of NHCSM (NH Commission on the Status of Men) duties. Larry thinks it may be time to define obligations of each officer on the Commission. He asked to add National Fatherhood Initiative's Capacity Building Grant as item number 7. Michael asked to add Uninvolved Dads and VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) as items 17 and 18. Larry moved to approve the agenda as noted**
Motion: Larry 2nd: Michael Passed unanimously
3. Secretary's Report/Approval of September Minutes – **Larry distributed the minutes from September and moved to accept them as written**
Motion: Larry 2nd: Scott Passed unanimously
4. Treasurer's Report – **David reported an approximate balance of \$2,742.18 and said he will check for accuracy**
 - a. NE Fathering Conference Sponsorship: Bill Payment – **Larry asked if the bill had been paid and David said he would check****Motion: Larry 2nd: Scott Passed unanimously**
5. Discussion: November and December Meeting Dates – **Larry asked if we would meet on 11-20, 12-4 or cancel because of the Thanksgiving holiday and if the Commission should meet on 12-18 or cancel the December meeting. Scott proposed meeting on December 4 for the November meeting and cancelling the regularly scheduled December meeting**
Motion: Scott 2nd: Cam Passed unanimously
6. Discussion: Officer Duties and Responsibilities – **Larry shared a draft of possible definitions (attached) and introduced the topic. He said that the list of duties were by and large what officers are doing now but written down. Scott wondered if other state commissions had officer descriptions. Members agreed to table the motion until Chairman Mastromarino is in attendance**
7. National Fatherhood Initiative's Capacity Building Grant, Letter of Support – **Larry shared a draft of a letter of support requested by John-Michael Dumais. Mr. Dumais is the**

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director of NHPIRC (Parent Information and Resource Center) and he is seeking funds from NFI (National Fatherhood Initiative) to expand fathering and father involvement in the state. If the grant request is successful NFI would expand the skills of PIRC staff to reach out to other state organizations with the message of the importance of father involvement. Mike moved to approve the letter of support

Motion: Michael 2nd: David Passed unanimously. Mike suggested that David could sign the letter in Joe's absence and Larry said he would get the signed copy to Mr. Dumais

8. Legislative Initiatives – **Mike talked about HB 139 (2009) introduced by Representative David Bickford, (r-Strafford) to 'promote comparable parental rights and responsibilities' and in cases where these rights are denied, '... the court shall set forth in detail the reasons for its decision in a written order.'** Mike explained that this language was important and suggested that the Commission publically support this position

Motion: David 2nd: Mike David and Mike agreed that children need the strongest connection to both parents whenever possible and that the language under consideration would encourage the connection. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Model Paternity Bill Update – **Michael reported that there was no further action as yet and volunteered to speak with Representative Bickford about bringing the matter forward**

10. NH CAN (NH Child Advocacy Network) Advisor Status Update – **Larry shared the Debbie Walsh correspondence. Ms. Walsh, Director of Operations for NH CAN emailed him a message assuring the Commission that they would be listed. Larry volunteered to check the website before the next meeting**

11. NH HHS Commissioner Toumpas/ Neal Boutin Invitation Update – **Members agreed to pass on this item until Joe's return**

12. NHCSM Internship – **Larry contacted Margaret Walsh at KSC (Keene State College) about opportunities. Scott has not received feedback. He has forwarded the item to Executive Counselor Ray Burton. The position description was reviewed by Mr. Burton and the intern in his office met with Scott to discuss the NHCSM position. The intern will speak with Counselor Burton and get back to Scott**

13. Web Site Update – **Larry reported that the minutes from August are listed**

14. Public Input I - **None**

15. Commission Seat Update – **Larry wondered if this item should be removed from the agenda. Cam and Mike made a strong case to leave it on and to ask Chairman Mastromarino to contact the Governor's office for an update**

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16. White House Community Forum on Responsible Fatherhood and Education Success –
Members reviewed the letter to the White House concerning the forum in Manchester (attached). The value of the forum was validated in the note and a request was made for minutes from the meeting. Mike and others talked about the forum being a beginning point for father involvement: where does the national effort go from this point on
17. Fathering Outreach/Posters – **Scott has talked with Tim Palmison giving him feedback on the first draft of posters. Scott will bring a second set to the next meeting if possible**
18. Other Agenda Items Brought Forward at Start of Meeting
 - a. **Uninvolved Dads – Michael reintroduced the idea he and Larry had brought up earlier: that the group of men uninvolved with their children were primarily not involved by choice or by court order. They agreed as did other Commissioner that this is a vast topic. David and others suggested that the topic could be a major one for study by the Commission during the next biennium. Mike said the topic would be one worthy of discussion by series of speakers. Mike offered a motion that uninvolved fathers will be a major theme for the next two years resulting in Commission recommendations in the 4th biennial Commission report**
Motion: Michael 2nd: Scott: David Passed unanimously
 - b. **VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) – Mike reported being in Washington recently as the VAWA act is being discussed. He made two points to Commissioners: the original legislation ordered mandatory arrest upon reports of violence and that states are barred from using lie detector evidence if they wish to apply for VAWA funding. He stated that studies have shown that in states where mandatory arrests were enforced that violence against women was higher than in states where officer discretion was in force. David asked for the name of such and study and Michael said he would get it. Cam and Mike discussed whether mandatory arrest could cause minor hostility to escalate to major violence. Michael's second point about lie detectors was challenged by David in that 'evidence' from lie detectors was not recognized by courts. Mike responded that VAWA regulations against lie detector results was a cover to allow women to deny men contact with their children on the unchallenged claims made by some mothers, i.e. that they felt threatened. Larry asked if NH has a mandatory arrest law or used (police) officer discretion? Mike said the latter.**
19. Announcements – 2 min
 - a. **New England Fathering Conference – March 17 – 19 2010, Newport RI – Larry shared the save the date card for this event**
 - b. **Scott reminded members that the Commission would have to make sure a room was available for the rescheduled November meeting (12-4-09)**
 - c. **Larry asked if our 3rd biennial report is due soon**
20. Public Input II - None

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The meeting ended at 3:55